

Jennie Germansen Profile

It's the Friday after The Storms. The piled snow forms canyon walls on either side of the white roads. It's late morning and there's no school, at the end of a school-less week. Jennie teaches at Sinagua high school, so she's had the week off. She usually teaches 9th and 12th grade English, but that changed last fall. Three days before the semester began, she got a phone call: The scheduled yoga teacher was sick, and they wanted Jennie to take over. Since then, a lot has been changing.

For starters, she's not going to teach next year; well, not in the school district. I ask what she's going to do instead. She tells me she's doing an Anusara Immersion program with Darren Rhodes and Christina Sell, which lasts into the spring and incorporates study of asanas as well as reflection and philosophical study. Following that, she wants to do teacher training. Those are the parts she has "planned." But, there are other parts unknown, and of those she smiles warmly and simply says, "I don't really know what's going to happen."

Jennie first tried yoga on a mat in a dorm room in college; a video, leading her through the new movements. Later, she did Bikram yoga, on and off, for about a year. She liked the poses from the start, but it's clear her *relationship* with yoga began about three years ago, when she began practicing Anusara. For Jennie, all of her relationships are dear to her. As such, the community aspect of Anusara yoga, as well as at our particular studio, is something she points out as being very important to her. She says in other types of yoga classes, you may find yourself watching "the perfect, skinny, model-like girl in a pose, and you're like, "I'm sooo not there." But, in Anusara, they'll show you a pose and you find it beautiful. And then they'll tell you: "you can do this."

Over time, we actually start to believe our teachers. And then we start teaching ourselves. Jennie refers to the cultivation of such a voice as the "inner teacher." She talks about learning to go beyond where your "outer" teacher is leading you, and begin to learn to go there yourself. She says: "At first, I thought (yoga) was an exercise. But... I'm starting to take it to a level where I look to myself as an inner teacher, which is a new thing because there's still so much I feel like I need from my outer teachers."

Teaching others comes naturally to Jennie: giving is part of her makeup. Being thrown into a classroom of 30 girls with three days notice, no previous experience, and yoga as the subject, didn't shake her. She says, "I love people. I love being with people. I love helping people..." The challenge comes somewhere else: giving to herself. "Giving myself time is... really weird. It's unnatural."

It seems cultivating factors have led Jennie to this new turn in her path. Encouragement from teachers, hours on her mat, teaching high school girls they have value while teaching them poses: somehow all wound together, like storm clouds, and then placed itself before her, like feet of fresh snow. It seems whatever the next instruction, and whatever the next step of coming to know her teacher within, one thing is certain: that teacher is already the one leading the way.